

October 14, 2011

Report from The Accountability Group to the UUA Board of Trustees

Criteria: At the Board's request, the Accountability Group discussed criteria or questions that should be considered by groups considering

- As part of the special focus for this General Assembly, the Unitarian Universalist Board of Trustees has pledged to keep the business aspects of General Assembly to a minimum and has worked with groups such as the Commission on Social Witness to revise procedures for this one General Assembly. Groups considering business at the 2012 Justice General Assembly are asked to apply this same lens to their agendas, using the following questions:
 - Is a meeting at GA 2012 necessary because required by by-laws or other governing documents?
 - If so, what is the minimum required business that can be conducted?
 - Can this business be conducted virtually or in some other manner?
- Groups should also be asked, if they chose to meet to have a discussion about accountability, perhaps with these questions:
 - Who are we accountable to and why?
 - How can we make our group relevant and inclusive of people who on the historic margins?
 - In what ways are we, or can we, be in solidarity (and to whom.)?
 - Given what we know about our associations relationship with people of color and what is happening to people of color all over our country how might we be more open and engaged with anti-racism and/or anti-oppression?
- We recommend that all affiliated and related groups likely to be meeting at General Assembly receive a communication from the Board asking that these standard be met.

Minimum Business: The Accountability Group wishes to register an additional request that the Board examine whether all of the issues it has placed on the agenda meet these criteria.

Noting the Needs of Marginalized Groups: We appreciate the efforts of Jan Sneegas, Don Plante and the other staff members to address on-going accessibility and safety concerns as well as the reception of the GA Planning Committee to these concerns.

Messaging General Assembly: We continue to be concerned about the misinformation that is circulating about the Justice General Assembly. People continue to speak to us about their conflicts about a General Assembly that is focused on getting arrested and other misconceptions. We were dismayed that the press release had very little circulation and that there does not appear to be a concentrated effort (using President Morales' and Moderator Courter's speaking engagements, Standing on the side of Love, the UUMA communications et cetera) to spread a counter message.

Opening Ceremony: In keeping with the unique nature of this event and the fact that we understand that congregations will be asked to make justice oriented banners, we suggest that congregations be asked to consider the following questions as they design their banner: What do we mean by justice? What is the relationship between social justice and social change? What does our faith say about justice? Why does it matter?

Housing: The Accountability Group discussed an idea that emerged from the Council of Cross-Cultural Engagement to provide a designated block of housing for people of color and their allies, including youth of color. This idea was seen as having merit by the group and while logistical considerations might make this unfeasible, the group thought the idea had merit. People of color AND members of the other historically marginalized groups represented on the Accountability Group could benefit from a place where they could gather informally to debrief and share experiences.

Representation: Representatives of the Accountability Group are serving on the group planning the Service of the Living Tradition, the Program Development Group, in an advisory capacity on the issue of chaplaincy, on the group planning the Opening, and as a liaison to the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association.